

Submission HLG 00103-22: Screening for Appropriate Assessment Determination. Foreshore Licence application by Eirgrid PLC.

TO: Minister of State Burke
STATUS: Completed
PURPOSE: For Decision and Signature

AUTHOR:
OWNER:
REVIEWERS:



DIVISION: Foreshore
DECISION BY: 10/03/2022

Final comment

Approved by minister, 11/03/2022

Action required

Ministerial determination on the Screening for Appropriate Assessment and signing of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment Determination Statement if approved.

Executive summary

Celtic Interconnector is a proposed electrical link, consisting primarily of a subsea cable, which will enable the movement of electricity between Ireland and France and will be the first direct energy link between the two countries, running from the south coast of Ireland to the north-west coast of France.

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended ('The Regulations'), the Department has undertaken Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA).

Having considered all relevant material a recommendation has been made that the Minister accepts and adopts the Screening for Appropriate Assessment report and reaches the following Screening for Appropriate Assessment determination:

That an Appropriate Assessment is required as the project individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect European sites. The risk of likely significant effects on European sites cannot be excluded on the basis of objective evidence. This determination is based on the location, scale, extent and duration of the proposed development, including temporary works, and has not taken account of measures intended to avoid or reduce significant effects on European sites.

Detailed information

EirGrid PLC. are applying for a licence for the Celtic Interconnector project. The Celtic Interconnector is a proposed electrical link, consisting primarily of a subsea cable, which will enable the movement of electricity between Ireland and France and will be the first direct energy link between the two countries, running from the south coast of Ireland to the north-west coast of France. This proposed international development will constitute high technology infrastructure that is approximately 575km in length across both terrestrial and marine environments. It will have a capacity of 700 MW (equivalent to the power used by 450,000 homes).

Further details of the proposed activity are outlined in the application form and associated documents linked below.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/foreshore-notice/7bfb1-eirgrid-celtic-interconnector-electricity-cable/>

Brief Description of Work:

The proposed Celtic Interconnector, which is the subject of this Foreshore Licence Application, involves the pre-lay installation works, cable installation works, operation, and periodic maintenance of a submarine electricity interconnector between Ireland and France. The interconnector will include a fibre optic link to enable communication and operational control of the interconnector, with the potential for some fibres to also be used for commercial use.

The Celtic Interconnector comprises:

- Two high voltage direct current (HVDC) electricity power cables;
- A smaller fibre optic link for control and communication purposes;
- All associated works (and work sites) required to construct, install, test, and commission the cables; and
- All associated works (and work sites) required to operate, maintain, repair, and decommission the cables, including 2 repair events over the approximately 40-year lifetime of the Project.

As part of the assessment of the foreshore application Ove Arup & Partners Ireland Ltd (Arup) with Hartley Anderson Limited were commissioned as *Independent Environmental Consultants* to conduct a Screening for Appropriate Assessment (stage 1 screening) and if required, an Appropriate Assessment (stage 2), of the likelihood significant impact on European Sites from the proposed works in the application for a Foreshore Licence.

A number of application documents submitted by EirGrid Ltd. have informed Screening for Appropriate Assessment and are listed below:

- Foreshore Application Form (**Tab 2**)
- Foreshore Licence Map 1 400584-PL-DWG-009 Rev D (**TAB 3**)
- Foreshore Licence Map 2 400584-PL-DWG-009 Rev D (**TAB 3**)
- Screening for Appropriate Assessment prepared by IEC (**TAB 4**)
- Public Submissions received under Section 19 (**TAB 5**)
- Applicants responses to PS under Section 19 (**TAB 6**)
- Prescribed Bodies Consultation Observation received under Section 19 (**TAB 7**)
- Applicants responses to the PBC Observations under Section 19 (**TAB 6**)

These documents and all documentation submitted by Eirgrid Plc. can be found at the following link:
<https://www.gov.ie/en/foreshore-notice/7bfb1-eirgrid-celtic-interconnector-electricity-cable/>

Public Consultation under S19 of EC Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 as amended.

The licence application was open for public consultation from **11 October 2021 through 06 December 2021**. The Department received two submissions from the public during the Public Consultation period, which are attached at (**Tab 5**). The applicant's responses to the submissions are attached at (**Tab 6**). These documents are also available on the Departments website.

Prescribed Bodies Consultation under S19 of EC Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 as amended.

Foreshore Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 353 of 2011) provides under Regulation 3 that when considering a foreshore application, as set out under section 18A (1) of the Act of 1933, the Minister may seek observations from a number of prescribed bodies. For this application, observations were sought and received from the following:

Marine Institute;

Inland Fisheries Ireland;

Geological Survey Ireland;

Health and Safety Authority;

Department of the Environment;

Climate and Communications;

Environment Protection Agency;

Underwater and Archaeology Unit/National Parks and Wildlife Service;

Department of Agriculture;

Food and the Marine;

Marine Survey Office;

Bord Iascaigh Mhara;

Commissioner of Irish Lights;

Sea-Fisheries Policy Management Division;

Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine;

Marine Advisor Ecologist;

Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage, Marine Advisors;

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Sea Fisheries Protection Authority;

Met Eireann;

Department of Defence;

Irish Coast Guard and Maritime Service;

Bird Watch Ireland.

Observations from the above are attached at **(TAB 7)** have been forwarded to the applicant. There were no objections in principle to the proposed works. The submitted observations and the applicant's response to such **(TAB 6)**, have been considered as part of the Appropriate Assessment Screening.

Independent Environmental Report

The Independent Environmental Consultants (ARUP) completed the Screening for Appropriate Assessment report in March 2022 **(Tab 4)** which concluded that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment was required as the project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on European sites.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment

This Screening for Appropriate Assessment report along with all relevant material was considered by the Departments Marine Advisor (Environment) who agreed and accepted the IEC's report and its conclusions and a recommendation has been made that the Minister accepts and adopts the Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report and reaches the following Screening for Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination:

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42(1) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended ('The Regulations'), the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has undertaken Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and the conservation objectives of relevant European sites, if the proposed project to construct and operate a subsea electrical interconnector cable, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect (s) on a European site(s).

In accordance with Regulation 42(6) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 SI 477 as amended, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has made a determination following screening that an Appropriate Assessment is required as the project individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect European sites. The risk of likely significant effects on European sites cannot be excluded on the basis of objective evidence. This determination is based on the location, scale, extent and duration of the proposed development, including temporary works, and has not taken account of measures intended to avoid or reduce significant effects on European sites.

The Screening for Appropriate Assessment Determination prepared by the Department's Recommending Officer, for Ministerial Determination, is attached at **(TAB 1)** for signing

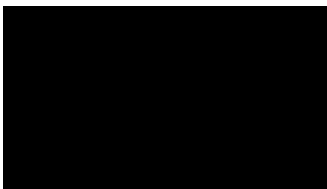
Submitted for Decision

Related submissions

There are no related submissions.

User details

INVOLVED:



READ RECEIPT

